

**National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, DC 20594**

**Brief of Accident**

**Adopted 07/23/2003**

ANC03LA029 File No. 13662		03/02/2003	KOTZEBUE, AK	Aircraft Reg No. N205BA	Time (Local): 15:04 AST		
Make/Model:	Cessna / 208				Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Engine Make/Model:	Pratt & Whitney Canada / PT6A-14A			Crew	0	0	1
Aircraft Damage:	Substantial			Pass	0	0	0
Number of Engines:	1						
Operating Certificate(s):	Commuter Air Carrier; On-demand Air Taxi						
Type of Flight Operation:	Positioning						
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation						
Last Depart. Point:	SHUNGNAC, AK				Condition of Light:	Day	
Destination:	Same as Accident/Incident Location				Weather Info Src:	Weather Observation Facility	
Airport Proximity:	Off Airport/Airstrip				Basic Weather:	Instrument Conditions	
					Lowest Ceiling:	1100 Ft. AGL, Broken	
					Visibility:	.75 SM	
					Wind Dir/Speed:	062 / 026 Kts	
					Temperature (°C):	-1	
					Obstr to Vision:	Blowing Snow	
					Precipitation:	Snow	
Pilot-in-Command	Age: 53				Flight Time (Hours)		
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)					Total All Aircraft:	25600	
Airline Transport; Commercial; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land					Last 90 Days:	180	
Instrument Ratings					Total Make/Model:	4200	
Airplane					Total Instrument Time:	2000	

Prior to departing on an air taxi flight, the airline transport certificated pilot obtained a weather briefing and filed a VFR flight plan for a trip from his home base, to several remote villages, and return. The area forecast contained an AIRMET for IFR conditions and mountain obscuration due to clouds and light snow. The terminal forecast contained expected conditions that included visibilities ranging from 3 to 3/4 mile in blowing snow, a vertical visibility of 500 feet, and wind speeds from 14 to 22 knots. During the filing of the flight plan, an FAA flight service station specialist advised that VFR flight was not recommended. The pilot acknowledged the weather information and departed. When the pilot took off on the return flight from an airport 128 miles east of his home base, the pilot reported that the visibility at his base was greater than 6 miles. As he neared his home base, the visibility had decreased and other pilots in the area were requesting special VFR clearances into the Class E surface area. The pilot requested a special VFR clearance at 1441, but had to hold outside the surface area for other VFR and IFR traffic. At 1453, a METAR at the airport included a wind 080 of 26 knots, and a visibility of 1 mile in blowing snow. While holding about 7 miles north of the airport, the pilot provided a pilot report that included deteriorating weather conditions east of the airport. Once the pilot was cleared to enter the surface area at 1458, he was provided with an airport advisory that included wind conditions of 25 knots, gusting to 33 knots. While the pilot was maneuvering for the approach, a special aviation weather observation at 1501 included a wind condition of 26 knots, and a visibility of 3/4 mile in blowing snow. The pilot said he established a GPS waypoint 4 miles from the runway and descended to 1,000 feet. He continued inbound and descended to 300 feet. At 1 mile from the airport, the pilot said he looked up from the instrument panel but could not see the airport. He also stated that he was in a whiteout condition. The airplane collided with the snow-covered sea ice, about 1 mile from the approach end of the runway threshold at 1504.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

ANC03LA029

File No. 13662

03/02/2003

KOTZEBUE, AK

Aircraft Reg No. N205BA

Time (Local): 15:04 AST

---

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - WHITEOUT

2. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND

-----

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

4. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

---

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.

The pilot's continued VFR flight into instrument meteorological conditions, and his failure to maintain altitude/clearance above the ground, resulting in a collision with snow and ice covered terrain during the final approach phase of a VFR landing. Factors in the accident were whiteout conditions and snow-covered terrain.